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STORAGE SPACE FOR COAL INADEQUATE;  
URGES MEASURES TO MEET DISTRIBUTION PLAN

Supplying the workers with fuel is a serious problem. In the past all efforts were directed toward assuring in due time and in sufficient quantities an equitable distribution of fuel among those households needing it; but at present all efforts are directed toward finding a way to assure the systematic fulfillment of the plan for distribution of fuel, mainly of coal.

Despite the efforts of the officials of the "Toplivo" (Fuel) Enterprise, the newly established system for supplying the working population with fuel has not, so far at least, produced the expected and desired results. In the first quarter, the plan of the "Toplivo" Enterprise for commodity turnover was fulfilled by only 56 percent, and for market stocks of coal, by only 29 percent. The situation has not improved during April. The collective orders at some places come in very slowly. At Sofia only 25 percent of the households have submitted their orders for coal, and these are for only 20 percent of their allotted quantities of fuel. At Plovdiv only 10 percent of the households have put in their orders, and these are for only 12 percent of their allotted quantities of coal. At Stalin only 17 percent of the households have submitted their orders for only 15 percent of their allotted quantities of coal. At Ruse only 18 percent of the households have submitted orders for only 20 percent of the total fuel allotments of the city.

Serious difficulties prevent the regular and systematic disposal of coal received by the "Toplivo" Enterprise. The reasons for this state of affairs are numerous, but two are outstanding. The comparatively mild winter enabled the households to economize on consumption of fuel delivered during the past year. The citizens are convinced that coal is no longer difficult to obtain, and that they can get as much as they want whenever they wish. This confidence is a happy sign, for it shows that they believe, and have more and more reason to believe that the production of commodities in Bulgaria is constantly increasing and that the abundance of goods of all kinds, which has resulted from the rapid development of socialist industry, is constantly growing. But as far as coal is concerned, this confidence of the workers has resulted in great difficulties. The mines cannot cease their production of coal. They do not

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have the right to store the coal produced and to put it at the disposal of households and enterprises so that they may withdraw it only when they need it. The "Toplivo" Enterprise does not possess a sufficient number of large warehouses and sheds in which to store and preserve all the coal being received according to plan, and then sell it in the fall when the citizens' needs will result in a mass demand for fuel. Coal distribution to households, enterprises, and offices must be carried on systematically and according to plan throughout the year.

This will be possible only if the "Toplivo" Enterprise supplies fuel on credit to workers and employees, as it did during the past years, on the guarantee of the enterprises and offices where they are employed. Hence, the abolition of the credit system is the biggest obstacle to the adequate movement of supplies of coal and other fuel to the working people. A certain amount of fault is to be found, also, on the part of the managers of a large number of enterprises and offices, who have taken an irresponsible and neglectful attitude toward the filling of collective orders by their workers and employees.

The plan of the "Toplivo" Enterprise for distributing fuel during this year has been increased by 93.2 percent over that of 1950. For this plan to be fulfilled on schedule in Sofia alone, from 1,800 to 2,000 tons of coal must be distributed each day. But at present, while the mines are fulfilling their production plans and sending large quantities of coal to Sofia daily, the average daily distribution of coal from all the warehouses of the "Toplivo" Enterprise is only about 400 tons. If the disposal of coal continues at the same rate, instead of satisfying the needs of all households, enterprises, and offices by the end of November, the plan for coal distribution will be fulfilled by only 25 to 30 percent. During August and September the others (for the larger part, families) will appear in great numbers before the doors of the warehouses seeking fuel; but it will not be possible to meet their needs, with the result that many of them will run the risk of doing without fuel even during the winter.

The plan to introduce coal as fuel in the villages through the members of farm workers' cooperatives and machine-tractor stations also will not be carried out. Economic councils and village people's soviets all over the country stress the peasants' great satisfaction with the decision that they too shall be supplied with coal for fuel. Yet, the peasants insist that payment should be made at fixed periods during the year, in accordance with the basic production of each rayon; that is, in rayons where intensive cultivation is practiced the payments are to be made in May, and in the grain-producing rayons in August and September, when their produce is being sold.

The many difficulties in the distribution of coal create actual hazards for the "Toplivo" Enterprise. Lately, in the enterprise warehouses and on the open unloading platforms of railroad stations, large quantities of fuel are piled especially coal. These piles of fuel are exposed to weathering and are decomposing and rotting under the continuous rains. Large quantities of coal stored in the open are to be found near the "Toplivo" Enterprise warehouses at Stalin, Plovdiv, Ruse, Stara Zagora, and other cities, but the situation at Sofia is the worst, because the largest quantities of coal are piled here. A large part of this coal is stored in the open, spread over unloading platforms, and between the tracks at railroad stations, presenting an obstacle to the proper maneuvering of trains. Because of the frequent rains there is great danger that the coal in some warehouses may be destroyed through spontaneous combustion.

The press has raised the problem of coal distribution several times in the past. Conferences and discussions with responsible officials have taken place, and definite measures have been decided upon, yet nothing concrete has been done. If things are allowed to go on as they have until now, the daily losses sustained by the "Toplivo" Enterprise will soon result in its bankruptcy, and the national economy will suffer losses amounting to millions of leva. This, of course, should in no event be permitted to occur.

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